New Perspectives for Learning

Insights from European Union funded Research on Education and Training

This newsletter is the sixth in a series of occasional issues highlighting for policy and decision makers, some of the key conclusions and recommendations of projects conducted under the EU Targeted Social Economic Research (TSER) Programme and under the Key Action "Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base".

Education, Inequalities and Social Exclusion

Addressing social exclusion issues is a critical part of education policy making and practice. A number of research projects funded under the Fourth and the Fifth EU Framework Programmes have addressed the complex relationship between education, inequalities and social exclusion in both a direct and an indirect manner.

Recently completed European research shows that various factors inside and outside education and training cause, or at least contribute to processes of social exclusion. They are intertwined and appear to be mutually reinforcing but in different ways and at different stages in life.

Education has been seen by many national governments as a major tool for tackling the issue of social exclusion. However, European research demonstrates that the underlying factors involved are much broader and deeper than is often understood by policy-makers and that *one area of social policy is unlikely, on it's own, to be able to address the problem*.

Research shows that education measures will have to be reinforced by wider social and economic reforms if social exclusion is to be seriously addressed.

Education policy initiatives will have only limited success in removing barriers to inclusion if they are not consciously

"education measures need to be reinforced by wider social and economic reforms when addressing social exclusion"

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A full list of Briefing papers and details of ongoing projects can be found at: -
http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/index.htm

articulated with policies that address wider economic inequalities.

Greater attention has to be given to the ways in which inequalities are produced in the

complex interactions between the cultural, social and material sites of home, school and policy – to the interlocking of inequalities.

Research on new governance models for education and training indicates that the introduction of market mechanisms in education and training does not always follow a number of assumptions made by the advocates of marketisation of education. The effects that are reported include negative ones, in the sense that the introduction of market mechanisms could lead to further educational inequality and social exclusion of disadvantaged groups.

In general, it should be noted that: -

Developing an education policy that combats social exclusion is not a task that lends itself to "quick fix" solutions.

Policies that are about building social capital are also important, but they are a necessary complement to, rather than a substitute for, policies that attack material poverty.

Questions of education and training are intimately connected with issues of housing, health, welfare, youth, employment and immigration.

In addition to the funding of research projects in this area, DG-Research of the European Commission organised a workshop on "Education, Inequalities and Social Exclusion" in September 2002 (http://www.cordis.lu/improving/socio-economic/mechanism.htm, dialogue workshop No. 8).

Also, DG-Research has financed a study that reviewed the findings of 16 research projects funded under the TSER Programme of FP4 with a view to highlight implications in relation to issues of education, inequalities and social exclusion. The results of this study are available at: http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp41.htm

Encourage Gender Autonomy by Developing Self Competencies

Recently completed research into gender and qualifications has recommended that the most efforts should be focused towards encouraging "gender autonomy" in vocational education and training and continuous vocational training, rather than trying to equalise the numbers of people from either sex in each occupation.

Increasingly, the European workforce needs to become more flexible in order to meet the demands of an aging population in some regions, and for the continuous changes in skills requirements.

Traditionally, men dominate some types of work and women dominate others. This, in itself is tending to reduce workforce flexibility and create skills shortages that might be reduced, if gender was not considered a barrier to entry. In addition, inequalities can be created as gender can also impede both individual career options of women and men and has implications for human resource development. As well as addressing equal opportunities issues, vocational education and training systems need to aim to provide the skills for the workforce that enables both sexes to have the competences that don't restrict individuals according to their gender.

This project has investigated the impact of gender segregation of European labour markets on vocational education and training, with specific consideration to key or core competencies and qualifications. It addressed differences between women and men in terms of the further development of gender specific key competencies or in terms of their existing sets of key competencies in situations of occupational change.

The research was carried out in various European countries each representing a particular cultural and societal context - the United Kingdom for a market-oriented society; Germany - the strongly structured labour market in central Europe; Portugal - the strong modernisation of southern European countries; Greece - a society that still values highly traditional characteristics and Finland - representing the Nordic welfare state.

The project identified how both sexes could be supported in acquiring key competences, normally associated with the opposite gender, during initial and continuing vocational education and training throughout working life. This enables individuals to follow occupational pathways that best suit them, thus strengthening their individual autonomy. This also has the potential impact of enhancing the quality of existing human resources, which is good for the economy and society as a whole.

It was found that in spite of the different industrialisation and societal developments, the differences between European countries was much smaller than expected. In particular, the positive action of the Nordic welfare state did not lead to significantly different results, compared to southern Europe. Nor did the existence of a market-oriented economy or a strongly regulated labour market and vocational and educational system, show a significant difference, to influence the outcomes to a remarkable degree.

The project considered it advisable to encourage further mutual learning of boys and girls in order

"gender segregation in the labour market over the last decades has not been significantly reduced"

to broaden the scope of their key competences, perhaps also in mixed courses which encompass both, male and female dominated occupations. As most features of "gendered key competences" expose a very large area of overlapping between the two sexes. However, women and men often have rather different predominant expectations with regard to their self-actualisation in their future occupational life.

It was found that gender segregation in the labour market over the last decades has not been significantly reduced, as far as "typical" male and female occupations – like electricians and nursery nurses – are concerned. But most people seem to be quite happy with the state of affairs. It was considered that this attitude might partially be attributed to a "gender blindness" or "gender tiredness" as a result of the many proactive programmes recently.

The project gained valuable insights when observing "exceptional" cases i.e. men working or being trained as nursery nurses and women in the occupational field of electricians. Most "exceptional" young people had developed non-typical interests during their childhood - particularly self-competences. These were further developed during their training as female electricians and male nursery nurses. They were also sometimes treated differently as compared to their counterparts from the opposite sex. Exceptional people felt that they had to overcome rather strong reservations and sometimes prejudices on the part of employers and colleagues, but also of family and friends.

It was found that a lot of young people leave "atypical training" at an early stage because they find learning and working environments insupportable, through a mixture of attitudes and conditions encountered. However those people who succeed appear to be more conscious about their occupational choice and thus sometimes more engaged. That is, they make use of their additional key competences, especially regarding their personal development, and this enhances their occupational career, showing they have "gender autonomy".

Further information: -

Project Title: *"Gender and Qualification. Transcending gendered features of key qualifications for improving options for career choice and enhancing human resource potential"* March 2002.

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Dealing with occupational change depends very strongly on the motivation for that. This can be more due to external circumstances, like being laid off or removal due to marriage, necessity to re-enter the labour market after a family phase or adapting work conditions to support elderly parents. On the other hand, inner motivation can arise from the wish to improve one's work situation, either looking for work which is better paid or which is more intrinsically rewarding and creative.

Thus the key recommendation of the project is to focus towards encouraging "gender autonomy" in vocational education and training and continuous vocational training rather than trying to equalise the numbers of people from either sex in each occupation. Activities to strengthen and support gender autonomy should be through developing the "self competences" that create individual autonomy. With regard to occupational life the ability to pursue individual autonomy is sometimes called "competence to 'shape' one's own occupational biography".

Everyone regardless of gender should be given the opportunity to shape one's career path according to individual preferences, as far as possible. Individuals should be encouraged to further develop relevant key competences, particularly self competences connected to self-assurance, that is to try to become aware of one's own key competences beyond usual prejudices; to call in question the conventional perceptions of what is a male or female occupation; to dare to make "atypical" occupational choices and to develop perseverance in order not to give up at an early stage of an atypical career.

Vocational education and training systems and recruitment practices need to focus more on providing encouragement for all people, instead of reinforcing barriers, e.g. through recruitment practices according to gender stereotypes. It is particularly important to support people of either gender who intend or have decided to choose an occupation that is atypical for their sex.

In vocational education and training including training in companies this means having to counteract gender blindness and gender tiredness, as this is a major barrier for the "exceptional cases". There is a need to provide opportunities to work in gender-mixed classes and provide mentoring by people who have themselves made an atypical choice. But there is also a need to be aware of prejudices regarding gender-"typical" key competences.

Teachers, trainers and personnel managers, through continuous professional development need to be made more aware of how to support and encourage gender autonomy. In addition, wages need to be set according to gender equity. There is also a need for provision of childcare and appropriate parental leave.

Select Migrants according to their Skills

Completed research is suggesting that a migration policy that selects migrants according to their skills is beneficial to a country because skilled migrants assimilate very quickly to the society and economy of the receiving country. A fast assimilation in turn reduces the probability that migrants become dependent on social benefits. In addition, the immigration of selected workers reduces the possibility of negative effects of immigration on native employment as well as wages and may even create gains in efficiency that also result in positive distributive effects, not only for capital but also for native labour.

It has been suggested that a selective migration policy meets both political and economic objectives, since it reduces social tensions towards migration among the native population and enhances the economic performance. Therefore, a potential unified European migration policy should consider implementing a policy similar to the point systems used in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

The results of the research project further suggest that assimilation policies seem to be necessary to achieve a fast economic assimilation of the migrants and to reduce the potential costs of immigration for the receiving country. The studies on the assimilation of first- and second-generation immigrants as well as the determinants of welfare dependence of migrants also indicate that language skills are of particular importance.

This research was conducted against the background of an increasing need for a common EU migration policy, since the abolition of

interior borders results in a dependency of each member state on the immigration policy of the other states. Once a foreigner enters EU-territory, the further migration of this person is more difficult to control. As a result of free labour and product markets within Europe, individual member countries are unable to follow independent migration policies without potentially harming other members. Therefore, a unified migration policy on the European level may need to be considered. However, the organisation of such a policy requires knowledge about: -

The type of migrants (family migrants, economic migrants, asylum seekers, high or low skilled migrants) that are attracted by the different countries in the EU as well as the selection process and the determinants of return migration.

The determinants of a fast assimilation process of both, first- and second-generation migrants into the society and the labour market of the receiving countries in order to minimise the costs of immigration.

The effects of immigration on the labour market outcomes of natives.

The results of this project offer some important insights to these questions. Many case studies have been produced covering different issues and addressing different population sub-groups

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or domains of economy in eleven countries (UK, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Israel, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal and Spain).

The project also reached a number of general conclusions that have a more European dimension. It considered that economic factors are important determinants of the migration decision of individuals. Migration, however, does not always take place if there is a positive wage difference. In the case of strong ethnic networks it can also take place in spite of a negative wage differences. It also appears that immigration restrictions will only postpone but not prevent migration.

However the project found that, the results concerning return migration were rather mixed. The experience in Denmark indicates that less successful migrants have a higher probability to return to their home country. The results for Ireland indicate, however, that return migrants have higher skills and higher wages than the immobile Irish population.

At the time of immigration migrants appear to be in a disadvantaged situation when compared to similar natives. However, over their time in residence, immigrants assimilate with natives. The two most important determinants of fast assimilation identified in all countries are language skills as well as attachment to the labour market in order to accumulate labour market experience. These results indicate that effective integration policies should concentrate in particular on language courses.

The welfare dependence of migrants varied for the countries investigated. In Germany the fear of a "race-to-the-bottom" in social standards due to welfare magnet effects of generous social security systems was unfounded. However, this conclusion was not confirmed by the experience in Sweden. Further research in this area seems to be necessary to get a clearer picture.

In general the results of the different country studies indicate that existing problems faced by second-generation migrants are the results of factors that they share with other native children from underprivileged background, such as parents with no or few qualifications, large

Further information: -

Project Title: *""Labour Demand, Education and the Dynamics of Social Exclusion"* (July 2001)

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families, and in living in a relatively poor neighbourhood.

These results suggest that effective policies towards underprivileged families should also be effective for second-generation migrants and that, with the exception of policies stressing the accumulation of language skills, special policies towards second-generation migrations seem not to be necessary. There was some evidence to suggest the need to include third-generation migrants in future research.

It was also found that there were no negative labour market effects of immigration on natives and hence confirm the results obtained in other countries such as the US or Canada. In fact, it was considered that if European governments select migrants more according to the needs of their labour markets, social tensions about migration would be moderate and the economic performance of the respective country would be improved, as both political and economic objectives of policy-makers would be met.

In addition, a large number of country specific conclusions were reached based on a number of sub-projects focusing on different aspects of the topic. The project recommended that a unified migration policy is required at the European level, since individual member countries are unable to follow independent migration policies without potentially harming other members.

The role of language in the mobilisation of Ethnic and Immigrant minorities

Language is often at the centre of the political mobilisation of minorities within a majority group. It is a political issue and a cultural resort for minorities - playing a decisive role in the social integration of ethnic fringe groups and immigrants. However, these languages are hardly protected in any way.

One ongoing research project is examining language policies through comparative studies of ethnic minorities in Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain and Spain. The minorities involved are: the Frisians and the Turks in Germany, the Corsicans and the Tunisians in France, the Welsh and the Urdu speaking in the United Kingdom, the Sud-Tyroleans and the Chinese in Italy, the Catalans and the Moroccans in Spain.

Language policies are embedded in the social and political environment. Therefore, the project is dealing with the institutional framework conditions of language policies and the political discussions within the groups concerned. The main emphasis is on future minority language policies in the European Union with the aim of seeing if intervention is needed outside the sphere of just language preservation, training and development.

Although the project is not due to be completed until towards the end of 2004, some initial conclusions have been drawn. It has been found that language developments in the process of the formation of nation-states have been widely discussed at intellectual and at political levels, but the issue of language of mobile ethnic minorities, up to now has not been developed.

It has been found that the way a language is defined or self defined as being a minority language, influences linguistic policies at the institutional level and in the community. Understanding of what are majority and minority languages is dependent upon power

relationships at cultural, social, economic and political levels. Language is important for building and maintaining communities with both immigrant and territorial or national minority groups.

The legal protection of minority languages in the different national contexts is a recent phenomenon and has been influenced by international conventions and the European Union policies. Although there are differences in the various forms of protection, nation-state building is the main reason. As well as territorially based minority languages, immigrant minority languages are transnationally dispersed.

It was found that minority languages that are at risk of disappearing - as they are decreasingly being spoken and written - need a different approach from minority languages that are spoken world wide and are majority languages in other countries. The issue of language and how it relates to the State and nationality is becoming a higher priority with a single language nation is likely to be an exception in a future Europe.

The project has been able to make some initial recommendations. It considers that identification between State, nationality and language should be considered in the historical perspective and in a critical way that allows the development of multilingual and multicultural societies in the perspective of stronger European integration. Also, in spite of the differences in nation building, a comparison between the legislation protecting minority languages in the different European countries is needed in order to establish common European standards and good practices. There is also a need for a new approach to multilingualism, which should be promoted in all European schools.

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The education of Gypsy children within Europe

The expansion of the European Union increases the opportunities for people to move freely between Member States, including temporary workers and nomadic communities like Gypsies. However, this raises many issues for static communities with their infrastructures and facilities concerning how best to cope with the needs of such nomadic communities who are often difficult to contact and whose movements may be difficult to predict. One issue concerns the schooling of Gypsy/Roma children.

One recently completed research project has provided an updated analysis of the situation of the schooling of Gypsy/Roma children. Generally, it has been observed that education systems studied mainly in Spain, France and Italy have difficulty dealing with the schooling of the Gypsy/Roma children in a positive way. This is shown by the high percentage of absenteeism and dropping out of students who are also failing to gain school results.

Therefore the project has made a number of wide ranging recommendations aimed at addressing this issue. At the political and legal level there is a need to guarantee the protection of the fundamental rights of the Gypsy/Roma children in line with legislation in force, especially their right to effective education. This requires fully developing State and European legislation regarding the educational and cultural aspects of ethnic minorities. There is a need to enhance and help the development of a transnational, integrated, flexible and jointly coordinated approach to social and educational policies.

The project considered that educational policies should be promoted that addresses the itinerant groups of the European Union and creates the infrastructures that allow the inclusion of the Gypsy/Roma children within ordinary schools, thus assuring their right to education. Policies addressing the migrant population coming from Eastern Europe should be promoted guaranteeing the socio-educational integration and the fundamental rights of these children specially the disadvantaged. Priority should be given to the transnational coordination of educational policies so that they could pay especial attention to itinerant Gypsy/Roma groups, agricultural temporary workers and fair-goers.

There is also a need to articulate and implement coordination between the local, regional and state administration of each country in order to tackle effective socio-educational policies. Socio-educational and cultural policies should be designed to acknowledge the Gypsy/Roma

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culture in schools. There should also be the promotion of educational policies in the European Union that are directed towards acknowledging the Gypsy/Roma language and its inclusion in the teaching programmes at all levels of the education system.

It was also considered that there is a need to increase the inclusion of Gypsy/Roma people at all socio-educational levels of management and democratic participation – the State and local administrations, public and private institutions and non-governmental organisations. There should also be the implementation of educational policies that take into account the principle of positive discrimination regarding: assistance and scholarships to study, school resources, and catering services at school and the nursery.

Creation of new occupational patterns for cultural minorities: The Gypsy Case

Active citizenship and participation is becoming ever more important as decisions are increasingly being based on consensus and agreement rather than being imposed by authority. This is increasing the need for all communities including minority groups to be listened to, and to be involved in decision-making.

For example, the Romani community, who experience educational, cultural and work exclusion need to be included and actively involved in the formation of policy that aims to overcome these forms of exclusion. Consideration also needs to be given to the contributions of solidarity and cultural values that Romà are able to give to the wider community.

One ongoing research project is addressing this issue by identifying the barriers to work exclusion of Romà and ways of overcoming them. It is analysising the skills that Romà have developed as a social group and identifies how

these skills can contribute to the enrichment of the labour market and social cohesion. The activities of the project are being developed in five countries Spain, Portugal, Romania, France and the United Kingdom.

The project is not due to be completed until towards the end of 2004 but it has been able to draw some initial conclusions that have been developed by involving the Romani people in the project from the beginning.

Racism is considered to be the most influential factor in the social exclusion of Romà, followed by economic or work-related barriers. In work it creates barriers for Romà to enter into the labour market. Explicit racism in some companies shows itself through "internal non-written rules" that prevent Romani people being employed. Often employers do not allow Romani people to develop the skills to enter new work roles.

In the knowledge society, access to the labour market largely depends on academic qualifications. This affects Romani people given their educational history of exclusion. Education is a key factor that permits the overcoming of social, cultural, economic and labour inequality.

However, the presence of Romani and other minority cultures in the organisation and functioning of course content and school

practices favours its inclusion and social participation, and increases the success of the school as a tool for overcoming exclusion in cultural or ethnic terms. Education can contribute to overcoming inequalities and social cohesion by not only providing the knowledge and skills but also as an emancipating experience.

However, it has been found that, within the whole population in general and in the Gypsy Community in particular, grouping students in school according to cultural differences or learning levels does not facilitate school success nor help to overcome inequalities. The best educational experiences begin within the school context and ripple out into the community. Equal participation in the community and in educational centres is the driver for community development and contributes to educational quality.

Romani women experience exclusion on at least two levels: for being a woman and for being Romani. This creates stereotypes i.e. Romani women lack of interest in education and work and are more concerned with the home and family than with professional and educational training and access to the labour market.

However, the knowledge and information society does offer a number of tools for overcoming old and new inequalities. Many Romani individuals and organisations are making the most of these new possibilities. Fortunately, these new forms of economic organisation coincide with certain principles of organisation and development by Romani family businesses and the economical activities of Romà. Romà also have skills and competencies that coincide with certain aspects of new occupational profiles that do enable them equal access into the labour market.

It was found that Romani Associations are contributing to the recognition of Romà, its social, educational and work inclusion and are contributing to the fight against discrimination

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that they experience. Romani culture does have traditions and values of great worth, that can be useful for social cohesion and co-existence: solidarity and inclusiveness, and resolution of conflicts and dialogue.

Therefore initial recommendations suggest that policies need to be developed with the involvement of cultural minorities in order to understand their needs and enable concrete measures to be developed that facilitate equality. However, actions that pursue the inclusion of ethnic minority voices (like Romà) have to take into account the value of multiculturalism, where different cultures are expressed in a context of equality and interculturality, where positive synergies are produced for all. This particularly affects social and educational practices and policies.

There is a need to recognise previously acquired skills and provide accreditation of prior knowledge. As Romà is a global culture and not a territorial culture, specific international policies are required in order to best meet their needs. The European Union provides opportunities for the establishment of such policies particularly in the area of education and employment as a means of achieving social inclusion.

Further information: -

Project Title: *"Workaló. The creation of new occupational patterns for cultural minorities: the gypsy case"* (Final report is due in November 2004)

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Integrating Immigrant Children into Europe

Although, the phenomenon of immigration is not a recent development, its complexity does not appear to be yet fully understood. This is tending to result in policy that is reduced to addressing "emergency issues" such as gaining entry, finding a job and fighting crime.

This is even more noticeable with regard to minors of immigrant origin i.e. those with immigrant parents and/or grandparents. The national policies designed to integrate immigrant minors and minors of ethnic origin into their host society have not been very successful, leaving minors at risk of social exclusion.

One research project analysed national definitions, indicators, and evaluation systems, both in conceptual and in statistical terms. It also analysed specific policy responses in each of the countries that have been examined (Italy, Greece, Great Britain, France, Sweden, Belgium and Israel), especially in education and training. The project has reviewed classification and definition systems for the well-being of children and has developed a new definition of well-being for children of immigrant origin according to a hierarchy of basic indicators that could be used for evaluating the condition of children and targeting specific policy.

It has made a number of recommendations that rely on common definitions and regulations being established between countries.

Further information: -
Project Title: *"Child Immigration Project"* (February 2001)

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At European policy level there is a need to establish a European Intergovernmental Commission to unify the criteria used to define minors of immigrant origin. Common objectives need to be established for the well-being of minors, relating to school, the community, family, security and participation. These should be used to monitor native and immigrant minors' well-being, and social and cultural risk factors based on the United Nations international convention on the rights of minors.

A common approach to immigration needs to be established between countries and the requirements for citizenship need to be clearly identifiable for minors and their families to allow them to invest in the host society. The project also recommends that the criteria adopted for collecting statistics on minors (with immigrant backgrounds) needs to be harmonised.

A process needs to be adopted to monitor the minors that arrive in the host counties and for the granting of citizenship to minors. Language skills and the performance of school pupils in different countries, with emphasis on the mother tongue, also need to be monitored.

A common definition of the target of reference for cultural and educational policies directed towards the younger generation, should include immigrant minors and minors with immigrant parents and/or grand parents.

At national policy level it is recommended that there is a revision of school textbooks and curricula to introduce elements that are intercultural (inclusive of cultures) and reflect multicultural society. There should be the creation of training and refresher schemes for teachers. After defining the professional qualifications and skills that will be required, cultural mediators should be employed in schools, health care and public administrations. A manual for school operators was produced within this project by CBAI (Centre Bruxellois d'Action Interculturelle).

It is considered that there should be the promotion of periodic campaigns to inform immigrants of rights and duties, and criteria and principles relating to the well being of minors. Exchange programmes between students of different countries would encourage mutual respect for different cultures.

Children in Communication about Migration

Discussions about refugees and migrants coming to Europe have often paid little attention to the actual experiences, contributions and opinions of the children involved. Yet children are at the front line in building the new social contacts necessary for successful social integration in their new countries and communities. European countries have very different histories of migration, different expectations of incoming migrants and different policies regarding their education, employment and social inclusion, and these affect the processes of social inclusion or exclusion in different ways.

One ongoing "action research" project is addressing three major aspects of structural change in contemporary European society: the increase in global migration, the uses of new communication technologies, and the specific needs of children. The project has established media clubs in six European countries (U.K, Italy, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece). In each club a researcher and a media educator work with recently arrived refugee and migrant children to make visual representations of their lives and their experiences in their new locations.

In addition there should be support for the production of fiction, radio and TV programmes that are oriented towards promoting attitudes of reciprocity, particularly with regards to minors. Training and refresher seminars for adverting and media operators should be organised in order to provide greater understanding of the issue. There is also the need for the revision of self-regulatory codes of conduct adopted by the media with explicit reference to respect for ethnic minorities and the way minors are depicted in the mass media.

There should also be the promotion of projects that highlight plays, books and films, which focus on the patrimony of various cultures and promote the use of the museum system for intercultural purposes.

Using the Internet, a communications network has been established between the clubs to facilitate the sharing of children's media productions. The project is investigating how these children represent and express their experiences of migration and how their use of new media might enable their perspectives to inform the development of European educational and cultural policies. In the process, the project is seeking to identify how particular experiences of reception; educational practice, family re-unification and community involvement may more effectively promote social inclusion and economic and cultural integration.

Although this project is not due to finish until towards the end of 2004 some initial conclusions have been reached. Policy in the area of new technologies currently tends to assume that teaching 'socially excluded' children to use new technologies will necessarily bring about social inclusion. Research suggests that this is not the case, and that policies that seek to combat social exclusion in this way also need to pay attention to issues of pedagogy, social context and children's motivations to communicate.

Likewise, the promotion of media literacy and practical media production by young people can potentially create intercultural dialogue and offer opportunities for marginalised groups to represent themselves. However, this is not a guaranteed outcome. There is a need to devise pedagogic strategies that genuinely enable young people to express their perspectives and concerns.

Further information: -

Project Title: *"Children in Communication about Migration"* (The Final Report is due in October 2004)

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Contrary to much media rhetoric most of the video productions in the project show that the children's main concern was in developing and maintaining contacts in their new locations. Refugee and migrant children have a strong sense of wanting to belong and be accepted in the here and now rather than identifying necessarily with their past. This has implications for policies relating to areas of discrimination in educational and media access and to issues of local neighbourhood safety and security that exacerbate these.

There are wide discrepancies across Europe in migrant children's access and uses of technology that need to be addressed. This is particularly important in relation to the skills and competencies that are needed to use technology creatively, and the kinds of settings in which this might best occur.

While refugee and migrant children have high educational aspirations these are often not supported by the pastoral and educational practices in schools. One particular area of concern in the formal sector is the lack of policies and practice in relation to both language acquisition of the new language and retention and utilisation (e.g. for examination success) of their other language/s. Another area is the lack of suitable mentoring or counselling that meets the needs of these children and their often very disrupted lives.

"refugee and migrant children have a strong sense of wanting to belong and be accepted in the here and now rather than identifying necessarily with their past"

Active Participation and Informal learning in Young People's transitions to the Labour Market

Many young people move from formal education into work by actively choosing what they wish to do in the labour market. However, for some, especially those with poor qualifications, their active participation in choosing their pathway is rather more limited and can result in a lack of motivation and disengagement. Their transition often involves them being channelled into training schemes, neglecting individual aspirations and failing to address individual strengths that do not directly correspond to formal qualifications.

This ongoing research project focuses upon young people's active participation in their transition to the labour market by comparing disengaged young people with "risk biographies" to those with "choice biographies". In addition, it also considers the impact of both formal and informal learning on this transition process by analysing policies for young people in transition, that involve active participation and recognition of informal learning. Using case studies from different regions, the project aims to assess whether these policies are successful at enhancing motivation for active re-engagement in transitions to work compared to existing conventional schemes. Specific consideration is being given to the impact of strengthening the role of local youth policies within national transition systems.

Although, the project is not due to finish until towards the end of 2004 some initial conclusions have been reached. It has been found that getting the active involvement of young people does not form a key part of existing transition policies. Disadvantaged young people are seen as having "individual deficits" that need to be rectified rather than they being entitled to subjectively choose a meaningful career.

Compared to other parts of Europe, the Scandinavian countries seem to provide the most scope for active participation by providing choice at different levels. The orientation towards individual development of young people tends to be more important than direct entry into the labour market. Individual counselling is focused on enhancing intrinsic motivation. Participation in education and training is rewarded by financial allowances.

Young people across Europe and at different levels of education share a high distrust of formal education and employment related services such as vocational guidance. They consider that they are not treated as individuals and are critical of being subjected to curricula and procedures that do not enhance their life prospects. If available, they prefer informal rather than formal support. But this does also reproduce social inequality. Those without formal qualifications and family support

"compares disengaged young people with 'risk biographies' to those with 'choice biographies'"

strategically increase their "resources" through informal learning and support. However, often they do not get the necessary recognition for their informal skills. Their social networks can be supportive, but also increase exclusion due to the lack of connections to other social systems.

There is some evidence that young men have more difficulties in maintaining motivation after a series of de-motivating experiences in the formal system. Young women seem to be more capable of managing their motivation in a reflexive way although this may be hidden from those offering advice and support. But, this does not mean that they are more successful in finding their ways into recognised positions.

For most young people interviewed, their involvement in initiatives represented a "biographical turning point" where they could either re-invest the motivation they had individually maintained or experience a re-discovery of their motivation. They experienced relationships with project workers based on trust. They also felt they were part of a "family" – due to close relationships with project workers and with other participants (group building being a central part of the project methods). They experienced non-formal learning and training situations in which they can influence the content, the speed and forms of learning by being given responsibility for their own learning, but also for processes and decisions regarding the group and the project. They gained respect and recognition for their own choices and aspirations – even if not corresponding to the projects' objectives like "dropping out".

However, the experience of motivation through participation does not result in the sustainable inclusion for all young people. There appears to be limited success in effectively providing young people recognised qualifications *and* experiences of empowerment and motivation through active participation. Organised youth work projects are often highly participatory, but

"disadvantaged young people are seen as having 'individual deficits' that need to be rectified rather than they being entitled to subjectively choose a meaningful career"

the competencies they provide are hardly ever recognised by employers, the employment service or training institutions.

It was also found that vocational training and employment schemes are often administrated by rigid guidelines limiting the space for individual choice and influence.

Projects funded by local municipalities are more likely to combine subjective and systematic aspects, respectively to integrate youth policy elements with education, training and labour market policies.

However they are more vulnerable to policy change and they are a minor part of national transitions systems. Most agencies are third sector organisations that have credibility with young people and the flexibility to consider individuals with different needs and interests. However, their funding situation is often unstable due to short-term policy initiatives.

Further information: -

Project Title: *"Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of participation and informal learning in young people's transitions to the labour market. A comparative analysis in 10 European regions"* (The Final Report is due to be completed in October 2004)

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Engaging People in Active Citizenship

Across Europe, there is clear evidence of declining engagement in traditional democratic processes, with governments, companies and other organisations considered to be remote, and insufficiently accountable to their stakeholders. Yet, it is also widely believed that globalisation calls for new, and more devolved kinds of political and social structure, in which individual citizens will play a more active part.

This suggests that people need to be re-engaged as "active citizens", and enabled to take informed decisions about their lives, communities and workplaces. However, many people are both disengaged and lack the skills, knowledge or understanding to do so. This is particularly true for people with little formal education and most at risk of social exclusion on other grounds.

Governments have sought to address the issue through citizenship education programmes within formal schooling, but this can only have an impact in the long term and the benefits have yet to be demonstrated. Little research has been conducted about how individuals learn to become such active citizens, the role of formal schooling in this, and the potential role of lifelong learning including less formal mode of learning.

One recently completed research project found that there is no simple standard model of what an active citizen is, nor any single process for developing citizenship. The sense of citizenship is embedded in each individual's unique life history and formed through relationships with others (individually and in groups). It considered "active citizenship" as the active engagement in collective activity in one of four areas or "domains" - the state/formal politics, the workplace, civil society and the private domain.

It found that despite notable changes in the operation of formal democracy and in social structures over the last half-century, no significant differences were found between active citizens born in the 1930s and 1940s and those born a generation later. This may mean that change has been overstated or that the factors which make individuals active citizens remain constant, but apply to different, or fewer people.

Active citizens appear in general to be more highly educated than their peers. There is

therefore a danger that citizenship becomes yet another area of exclusion for those who have previously been less successful in education, and who are already more prone to exclusion. However, those who become active despite low levels of initial education often re-engage with formal education as a result.

Formal education in citizenship seems to have played little part in the formation of individuals. However, extra-curricular activity during formal education does appear to be important, as do structures that give students a voice in the running of their educational institutions.

Therefore the project recommends that governments and other organisations should create opportunities for individuals to learn citizenship skills through practice and participation in activities relevant to them across a range of contexts, and by supporting the development of learning resources. Such learning is likely to foster transferable citizenship skills from one area to another and could create disproportionate benefits.

Governments, political parties, employers and trades unions should seek to develop more inclusive approaches to engagement in the political and workplace domains so that they appear less hostile and more supportive. This could be aided by adopting a "learning organisation" approach and by encouraging the development of mentoring to help the less confident to develop relevant skills. Trade unions often play an important role in assisting less advantaged individuals to be active citizens in the workplace; this should be recognised and supported.

Governments and civil society organisations should provide more non-formal training for citizens involved in voluntary organisations. This is a route through which many people find their way back into the formal education system after previous failure. Governments should support embryonic civil society organisations. The formation and early growth of such organisations provide important learning opportunities for individuals and groups, and are more effective when modest amounts of external expertise and support are provided. However, organisations funding informal learning in civil society organisations need to recognise the 'process' character of citizenship learning, and develop funding regimes in which civil society organisations are more long-term and equal partners.

Governments and education providers (formal, non-formal and informal) should support the development of citizenship skills in home and private life, which may produce significant long-term benefits. Parents and others involved with the primary caring role for young children should be supported to recognise and develop their roles in forming citizens. Parent, family and women's education are particularly relevant.

As citizenship skills appear to be developed more through extra-curricular activities than through the formal curriculum, schools and governments should encourage such activities. Effort is required to ensure they are equally accessible to all, as extra-curricular opportunities are often disproportionately taken up by students from higher social classes. There should also be encouragement of initiatives that involve young people in the governance of their own educational and other institutions, as this is likely to be particularly helpful in creating a sense of engagement.

Further information: -

Project Title: *"Education and Training for Active Governance and Citizenship in Europe: Analysis of Adult Learning & Design of Formal, Non-Formal & Informal Educational Intervention Strategies"* (April 2003)

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"citizenship skills appear to be developed more through extra-curricular activities than through the formal curriculum"

Education Governance and its impact on Social Exclusion and Integration

Recently, changes have taken place in the way education is governed in Europe. There has been a movement away from governing by rules and directives to governing by goals and results, which has often been in combination with the deregulation and decentralisation of decision-making.

One research project found that educational policy can be changed by strategies involving the management; legislation and the way resources are allocated. The studies showed that such measures were carried out in perceived social contexts of instability and uncertainty in order to create consensus and harmony and to improve economic competitiveness. This presumed harmony and consensus made critical discussions of policy and the search for alternatives less likely in education. Arguments for educational restructuring had a fatalistic emphasis where no alternative options were present.

It was concluded that the way, in which educational policy is steered, has moved away from traditional centralised control policies to more decentralised policies in which local government has more control over how resources are allocated. Resource steering has involved the transfer of fiscal management to local districts, with changes in the workplace, curriculum and professional relations, contract management, new self-evaluation procedures and laws to modernise the education system. This has also involved addressing the problems of social exclusion.

National laws have introduced more explicit programmes for character, moral and civic education to address perceived needs of cultural dislocation and disintegration. Centralisation and decentralisation of educational governance co-exist. At one end there are tighter assessment strategies in teaching, increased attention to quality assurance through measurement of children's and teacher performance, and other accountability measures. At the other end of the spectrum are school 'educational zones,' - just one example of recent policies to decentralise – by developing partnerships between the school, community, the State and business.

"educational policy has moved away from traditional centralised control policies to more decentralised policies"

There appears to be a shift away from teachers addressing social issues to a pedagogical focus on the individual knowledge and attitudes of pupils. Categories that classify individuals and groups by socio-economic status and poverty – thus relating to inclusion in schools, appear to have remained the same since the 1960s. But the categories relating to differentiation, marginalisation and exclusion have shifted to include ethnicity, gender and race, including more detailed categories about family and delinquency in order to identify and target educational programmes, such as single parent families and teen-age pregnancy.

The cause and effect relationship of both ways of classifying exclusion are being correlated with characteristics of deviance. For example, the problem of marginalisation and exclusion is related to the social problems of lack of discipline in the community, unemployment, and dysfunctional families (single parent, teen-age pregnancy) and educational attainment. Therefore excluded groups are becoming defined through new social categories of deviance that make it less likely for these populations to ever become 'of the average.'

These external categories of deviance are then transferred into the school as internal ways of categorising students and it is then assumed that the role of the school is to re-socialise the child and family that are perceived to be deviant and lacking educational success.

Categories for statistical analysis are created in a way that helps decisions on how problems are acted upon by relating them to the causes of the problem. However the formulation of the categories, have often been influenced by whatever is the "social policy thinking" at the time. Statistical categories 'make-up kinds of people' as individuals are transformed into calculable and governable groups. The 'kinds of people' targeted have typically been drawn from theories of deviancy, with the groups and individuals designated by social planning for rescue or redemption in the name of progress.

Thus, the characteristics of deviant students need to be placed against those that define the 'good' student. That student is one who is flexible, has problem-solving skills, collaborates and is perpetually involved in a self-monitoring and active 'lifelong learning.' The quality of child is one that embodies an entrepreneurial logic.

It should also be recognised that the 'targeted' populations also use the categories to gain greater resource allocation.

The project therefore recommended that there is a need to reconsider the significance and underlying categories and distinctions that are used to order and classify who is included and who is excluded in policy and research about policy. The systems of reason are governing mechanisms that are not be taken-for-granted as the principles that order the 'problem-solving' of policy and actors are not neutral but constructive and productive of educational practice.

There is also a need to re-examine what has been generally accepted about social policy as it might be obscuring rather than clarifying the issues that need to be considered. This requires not giving up questions of justice and equity but how the rectification of social problems defines the normal and the deviant. More careful consideration needs to be given towards policies relating to decentralisation with those relating to centralisation.

While notions of market, individualisation, and more efficient local management of educational systems seem to have certain orthodoxy in reforms, policy makers should consider the downside of such reform, such as how new patterns of segregation and exclusion are produced.

Further information: -

Project Title: *"Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe"* (May 2001)

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